



Article by Etnia Nativa

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The legacy of J. Pandellis

Each week, Island Insight shares with you, through the eyes of Etnia Nativa, an experience way beyond tourist attractions and links the reader with the mystical aspects of the island, its culture, and its traditional heritage. This episode explains how our island made a significant and lasting impression on art.

Nostalgic-filled paintings of a peaceful epoch, reminiscences of historic moments, captured how Aruba inspired a vibrant and longstanding artist community flocking from all around the world, creating works that expressed an overload of mythical pigmenting smeared on a canvas of time from then till today.

Aruba's picturesque landscape has left a persisting impression in the hands of a very influential visiting artist, a Greek painter by the name of John Pandellis. He had influenced many locals and visitors to take on art. His poetic works have become legacies, showing a strong connection to island heritage.

Jean Georges (John) Pandellis (1896–1965), who first visited Suriname during the First World War and then left for Curacao in 1929, was one of Aruba's earliest art teachers. His many works are still sought-after and valued by collectors.

From stories we received from former island residents, we know that the talented artist, along with his wife and daughter, came to our island during the 1950s to rest. The family settled in the area of San Nicolas, and the peaceful pace of life immediately motivated him to overcome his boredom by asking the residents if they would like to take art lessons.

Impressed by the brush skills that Pandellis showed

in his works, several residents of the Lago colony immediately began taking art classes with him. Some of them currently surprise us with extraordinary private collections dating back to the time when oil from Maracaibo Lake was transported and refined on the island, holding many emotional anecdotes.

Pandellis' extraordinary technique and dedication made pupils who had never painted before follow his classes very attentively. Some of them became inspiring painters who would not only take the landscapes of Aruba to an international level but would motivate subsequent generations of their own families to follow this artistic tradition.

During Lago Colony's classes, one of his former students, Mrs. Edna "Eddie" G. Waddell, began what would become her personal career in painting. She has lost count of how many paintings she has produced, but she still remembers that she received \$250 for an island scene that she sold to an Aruban family back then. "I have given away at least 30 paintings," she said in one of her newspaper interviews.

Pandellis inspired Mrs. Edna "Eddie" G. Waddell not only to paint but also awakened in his student a passion that

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would immediately spread to her sister, Ms. Verna Burroughs, and later to the next generation of the family in the person of Mrs. Shari Cook, Mrs. Edna "Eddie" G. Waddell great-niece and owner of Art Creations Inspired Studio. The three paintings by John Pandellis that we expose in our article are part of the private collection of Diane, Tom, and Shari Cook, from North Carolina, United States. An incredible and indisputable pictorial inspiration that the Greek artist provided to Mrs. Eddie and that we invite you to check out by visiting Mrs. "Shari Cook's" Facebook page, where the influence of the teacher stands out in every brushstroke of the talented former student.

Certainly the passion for art in this talent family began in 1945, when Mrs. Edna (Eddie) G. Waddell and Mr. Clarence C. (CC) Waddell settled in Lago Colony, Aruba, remaining on the island for 18 years—a time when, without knowing it, the couple was laying the foundations for an unstoppable family artistic career.

The works of John Pandellis show the splendor of Aruba framed by the continuous movement of the Caribbean Sea, showing emblematic "pastel" tones full of nostalgia. Several originals of John Pandellis are also part of Etnia Nativa's private collection. Each one of his works has a moving story behind it that we will continue to share with our readers.

We encourage you to check out the weekly educational online episodes through Island-Insight, the more complete cultural blog of Aruba, and get to know that by getting to know the native feeling, you will love Aruba beyond its beaches.

If you are interested in connecting and really know all about your travel destination—our flora, fauna, geology, history, autochthonous art, as well as the true identity of the island—you should book a visit to Etnia Nativa, a unique native gem! Let Anthony, our acclaimed cultural columnist, guide and lecture you regarding the most interesting and revealing stories about Aruba's undiscovered native ethnicity, an adventure beyond beaches and tourist traps. Visit his magnificent dwelling that integrates reused materials with nature, bursting with culture and island heritage! Whats App +297 592 2702 etnianativa03@gmail.com

